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Attorney Docket No. P20358

In re application of : Roland MAYER et al.

Serial No. : 09/775,628

Group Art Unit: 1731

Filed : February 5, 2001

Examiner: M. Halpern

For : ELASTIC TRANSFER BELT

COMMISSIONER FOR PATENTS
 P.O. Box 1450
 Alexandria, Virginia 22313-1450

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Sir:

Transmitted herewith is an Appeal Brief Under 37 C.F.R. § 1.192 (in triplicate) in the above-captioned application.

- ☐ Small Entity Status of this application under 37 C.F.R. 1.9 and 1.27 has been established by a previously filed statement.
- ☐ A verified statement to establish small entity status under 37 C.F.R. 1.9 and 1.27 is enclosed.
- ☐ An Information Disclosure Statement, PTO Form 1449, and references cited.
- ☐ No additional fee is required.

The fee has been calculated as shown below:

Claims After Amendment	No. Claims Previously Paid For	Present Extra	Small Entity		Other Than A Small Entity	
			Rate	Fee	Rate	Fee
Total Claims: 22	22*	0	x 9=	\$	x 18=	\$0.00
Indep. Claims: 2	*3*	0	x 42=	\$	x 84=	\$0.00
Multiple Dependent Claims Presented			+140=	\$	+280=	\$0.00
Appeal Brief				\$		\$320.00
Total:				\$	Total:	\$320.00

*If less than 20, write 20

**If less than 3, write 3

- ☐ Please charge my Deposit Account No. 19-0089 in the amount of \$ ____.
- ☒ A Check in the amount of \$320.00 to cover the appeal brief fee is included.
- ☒ The U.S. Patent and Trademark Office is hereby authorized to charge payment of the following fees associated with this communication or credit any overpayment to Deposit Account No. 19-0089.
 - ☐ Any additional filing fees required under 37 C.F.R. 1.16.
 - ☐ Any patent application processing fees under 37 C.F.R. 1.17, including any required extension of time fees in any concurrent or future reply requiring a petition for extension of time for its timely submission (37 C.F.R. 1.136)(a)(3).

Neil F. Greenblum
 Reg. No. 28,394

4/30/03

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IN THE UNITED STATES PATENT AND TRADEMARK OFFICE

Appellants : Roland MAYER et al.

Group Art Unit: 1731

Appln. No. : 09/775,628

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For : ELASTIC TRANSFER BELT

APPEAL BRIEF UNDER 37 C.F.R. § 1.192

Commissioner for Patents
P.O. Box 1450
Alexandria, VA 22313-1450

Sir:

This appeal is from the Examiner's final rejection of claims 1 - 20, 32, and 33 as set forth in the Final Official Action of November 18, 2002.

A Notice of Appeal in response to the November 18, 2002 was filed March 18, 2003, along with a Request for a One-month Extension of Time. Further, the instant Appeal Brief is being timely submitted within two months of the date of the Notice of Appeal, i.e., by May 19, 2003 (May 18, 2003 being a Sunday).

The requisite fee under 37 C.F.R. 1.17(c) in the amount of \$ 320.00 for the filing of the Appeal Brief is being paid by check submitted herewith. However, if for any reason the necessary fee is not associated with this file, the Commissioner is authorized to charge the fee for the Appeal Brief and any necessary extension of time fees to Deposit Account No.

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This appeal brief is being submitted in triplicate, pursuant to 37 C.F.R. 1.192(a).

(1) REAL PARTY IN INTEREST

The real party in interest is Voith Paper Patent GmbH by an assignment recorded in the U.S. Patent and Trademark Office on February 5, 2001 at Reel 011514 and Frame 0930.

(2) RELATED APPEALS AND INTERFERENCES

No related appeals and/or interferences are pending.

(3) STATUS OF THE CLAIMS

Claims 1 - 20, 32, and 33, the only claims pending in the instant application, stand finally rejected.

(4) STATUS OF THE AMENDMENTS

No amendments have been entered subsequent to the November 18, 2002 Final Office Action.

(5) SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

The instant invention is directed an elastic transfer belt and process for guiding a fibrous material web, in particular a paper, cardboard, or tissue web in machines for producing and/or processing the same provided in the zone of the press section for dewatering and/or the subsequent drying section for drying the fibrous material web. (Specification paragraph [0002] "Field of the Invention"). The present invention includes

a transfer belt traveling at a same speed as or at an only slightly greater speed than the delivery element during the acceptance of the fibrous material web from a delivery element, traveling at the same speed as or at an only slightly greater speed than the accepting element during the delivery of the fibrous material web to an accepting element, and being driven and slowed in such a way that it is stretched lengthwise more during the delivery than during the acceptance of the fibrous material web, so as to correspondingly stretch the fibrous material web guided by the transfer belt between the acceptance and the delivery. (Specification paragraph [0005]). The present invention recognizes that the wet fibrous material web stretches irreversibly in a first tensile stress, and that subsequent tensile stress leads to additional stretching only when such subsequent tensile stress is higher than the first stretching. (Specification paragraph [0007]). Further, according to the invention, the stretching, due to the high moisture content in the initial zone of the drying section, should be greater than the subsequent tensile stresses in the drying section. (Specification paragraph [0008]).

In accordance with an exemplary embodiment of the invention, a fibrous material web 1 is guided through one or more press nips, which are formed by press rolls 10. A press felt 6, positioned on each side of fibrous material web 1, travels through each press nip in order to accept water squeezed out of fibrous material web 1. Further, after upper press felt 6 separates from lower press felt 6 and material web 1, lower press felt 6 is arranged to act as

a delivery element 5 to transfer fibrous material web 1 to transfer belt 2, which is formed as an elastic, as well as smooth and permeable belt. (Specification paragraphs [0031] and [0032]; and Figure).

Suction devices are arranged on a side of transfer belt 2 opposite from the fibrous material web 1 to improve its adhesion to transfer belt 2. Moreover, transfer belt 2 is arranged to wrap around suctioned guide roll 11 where fibrous material web 1 is accepted from delivery element 5. During this acceptance, transfer belt 2 is in a slightly stretched state, with respect to web travel direction 9, and travels only slightly faster than delivery element 5 to create a small tension that improves the acceptance of fibrous material web 1. (Specification paragraph [0032]; and Figure).

After acceptance, transfer belt 2 is guided over guide roll 8 with a slowing effect, which is necessary because guide roll 4, provided subsequent to the delivery of fibrous material web 1, travels at a considerably higher speed. Thus, a relatively strong stretching occurs in transfer belt 2, and, therefore, in fibrous material web 1. Guide roll 8, which is positioned between the acceptance and the delivery of fibrous material web 1, is formed by a suctioned roll to improve adhesion of fibrous material web 1 to transfer belt 2. An acceptance element 3, formed as a heated drying cylinder 7, is wrapped by the stretched portion of transfer belt 2, between guide rolls 4 and 8, which enables a frictional transfer. (Specification paragraphs [0033] and [0034]; and Figure).

Because the stretching of transfer belt 2, at the delivery of fibrous material web 1 to acceptance element 3 is stronger than any stretching normally to be expected in the drying section, acceptance element 3 rotates at a speed higher by about 2.0% than guide roll 8 in the middle. As this stretching of fibrous material web 1 is plastic and can only be increased by an even stronger tensile stress, no further stretching need be expected in the drying section. (Specification paragraph [0035]; and Figure).

(6) **ISSUES**

(A) Whether Claims 1 - 20, 32, and 33 are Improperly Rejected Under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as Being Anticipated by VALLIUS.

(7) **GROUPING OF CLAIMS**

For the purpose of this appeal, Appellants submit that none of the claims stand or fall together. Therefore, each of claims 1 - 20, 32, and 33 are separately patentable for the reasons set forth hereinbelow.

(8) **ARGUMENT**

(A) The Rejection of Claims 1 - 20, 32, and 33 Under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) Over VALLIUS is in Error, the Rejection Should be Reversed, and the Application Should be Remanded to the Examiner.

The Examiner asserts that VALLIUS shows a transfer belt 17A for transferring a web from a press section to a dryer section, in which transfer belt 17A is an elastic belt with a

smooth surface. The Examiner also asserts that the stretched portions of the belt are not structural aspects of the invention. Appellants traverse the Examiner's assertions.

Appellants' independent claim 1 recites, *inter alia*, an *elastic transfer belt* arranged to transfer the fibrous material web between an acceptance region and a delivery region, in which said transfer belt is *driven or slowed to be stretched more during delivery* of the fibrous material web to said accepting element belt *than during acceptance* of the fibrous material web from said delivery element. Further, Appellants' independent claim 32 recites, *inter alia*, an *elastic transfer belt* arranged to transfer the fibrous material web between an acceptance region and a delivery region, a first guide roll arranged to drive said transfer belt in a zone of said accepting element, a second guide roll arranged to drive said transfer belt in a zone of said delivery element, and *said first guide roll is structured and arranged to drive said transfer belt, in said zone of said accepting element, at a speed faster than a speed at which said second guide roll is structured and arranged to drive said transfer belt in said zone of said delivery element*. Appellants submit that VALLIUS fails to disclose at least the above-noted features.

Appellants note that, while VALLIUS discloses a device for transferring a web from a press section to a dryer section, VALLIUS fails to disclose the apparatus recited in at least independent claim 1. While acknowledging that the Examiner is correct that belt 17A of VALLIUS has elastic properties, Appellants submit that the pending claims are not solely

directed to the construction of the transfer belt as elastic, but also recite additional structures and/or arrangements of the recited elements within the apparatus which define the instant invention over VALLIUS.

Appellants' independent claims 1 and 32 specifically define various regions within the apparatus, e.g., an acceptance region and a delivery region. The acceptance region is defined as the region in which the material web is *accepted onto the elastic transfer belt* from the delivery element and the delivery region is defined as the region in which the material web is *delivered from the elastic transfer belt* to the acceptance element. Thus, the delivery region of the elastic transfer belt is downstream of its acceptance region. Moreover, the elastic transfer belt is *driven or slowed to be stretched more during delivery* of the fibrous material web to said accepting element belt *than during acceptance* of the fibrous material web from said delivery element. Thus, the instant invention stretches the transfer belt more in the delivery region, which is downstream of the acceptance region, in order to provide a corresponding stretching of the web.

In contrast to the above-noted features, Appellants note that VALLIUS fails to provide any disclosure that elastic belt 17A is driven so as to be stretched more in the (delivery) region of transfer roll 40', in which the web is delivered from belt 17A to an acceptance element (40'), than in the (acceptance) region of roll 21, in which the web is accepted onto belt 17A from a delivery element (21), as is recited in at least independent

claims 1 and 32.

Of course, Appellants are not implying that VALLIUS does not disclose that the web undergoes an elongation as it passes through the VALLIUS apparatus. Instead, Appellants are pointing out that, instead of stretching the transfer belt in the manner recited in the pending claims, VALLIUS discloses that the web is elongated in the equalizing nip. Thus, Appellants note that, instead of a purposeful and intentional stretching of the web as it is guided on the more stretched region of the transfer belt in the delivery region, the elongation of the web in VALLIUS is an unintended result of processing in the equalization nip which must be compensated for.

Due to this elongation of the web in the equalization nip, VALLIUS is required to monitor a difference in speed between the web speed prior to the equalizing nip and the web speed after the equalizing nip to compensate for the resultant elongation of the web in the equalizing nip. However, in contrast to the present invention, VALLIUS fails to disclose a speed difference in the transfer belt between an acceptance region and a delivery region.

To achieve the desired speed difference, VALLIUS adjusts the speed at which belt 17A is driven. However, VALLIUS only discloses driving belt 17A at a speed necessary to compensate for the elongation of the web in the equalizing nip, and fails to provide any disclosure regarding the stretching of the web at a downstream delivery region, and certainly fails to provide any disclosure that belt 17A is stretched more in the delivery (downstream)

region than in the acceptance (upstream) region.

Therefore, Appellants submit that, as VALLIUS fails to disclose at least the above-noted features of the instant invention, the applied art fails to disclose every recited feature of the instant invention. Thus, Appellants submit that the Examiner has failed to establish an adequate evidentiary basis to support a rejection of anticipation under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b), and that the instant rejection is improper and should be reversed and remanded to the examining group for further consideration and allowance.

Appellants further note that, in the Advisory Action of February 12, 2003, the Examiner asserts that the stretching of the transfer belt is not a structural aspect of the invention. Appellants traverse the Examiner's assertions. In particular, Appellants note that the belt is arranged in the apparatus so that a portion of the belt (in the delivery region) is stretched more than another portion of the *same belt* (in the acceptance region). Appellants further submit that these regions of differing tension in the same belt are structural aspects of the belt and/or achieved through the arrangement of the belt within the apparatus. Thus, Appellants submit these recited features of the present invention must be shown by the art of record in order to maintain an anticipation rejection. As Appellants have shown that VALLIUS fails to disclose these features, Appellants request that the Board reverse the Examiner's decision to finally reject the pending claims.

Moreover, Appellants note that VALLIUS fails to teach or suggest the recited guide

rolls and/or speed differentials which are utilized to drive the elastic transfer belt so as to achieve the recited stretching, as recited in at least claims 4 - 8. That is, because VALLIUS fails to disclose the specifically recited stretching of the elastic transfer belt, as well as the other recited structured and arrangement of the guide rolls, Appellants submit that claims 4 - 8 are separately patentable over VALLIUS.

More specifically, Appellants submit that claims 4 - 8 are separately patentable over VALLIUS because VALLIUS further fails to disclose, *inter alia*, guide rolls arranged to control speeds of said elastic transfer belt, at least one of said guide rolls being positioned in, or subsequently to, a region of delivery of the fibrous material web by said elastic transfer belt, and at least one other guide roll positioned in, or subsequent to, a region of acceptance of the fibrous material web by said elastic transfer belt, wherein said at least one guide roll is arranged to rotate faster than said at least one other guide roll, as recited in claim 4; at least one additional roll is positioned in said region of acceptance of the fibrous material web by said elastic transfer belt has about a same speed as said at least one other guide roll, as recited in claim 5; said at least one guide roll is positioned behind, relative to a web travel direction, said region of delivery of the fibrous material web to said elastic transfer belt, as recited in claim 6; a speed of said elastic transfer belt during said acceptance of the fibrous material web by said elastic transfer belt is about 0.2% to 5.0% lower than during said delivery of the fibrous material web to said acceptance element, as recited in claim 7; and said speed of said

elastic transfer belt during said acceptance of the fibrous material web by said elastic transfer belt is about 0.5% to 4.0% lower than during said delivery of the fibrous material web to said acceptance element, as recited in claim 8.

Thus, Appellants further request that the Board reverse the rejection of claims 4 - 8 as being separately patentable over VALLIUS.

Further, Appellants submit that claims 2, 3, 9 - 20, and 33 are allowable at least for the reason that these claims depend from allowable base claims and because these claims recite additional features that further define the present invention. Moreover, Appellants submit that, as VALLIUS fails to disclose the features recited in claims 2, 3, 9 - 20, and 33 that further define the inventions recited in their respective base claims, these claims are likewise separately patentable over VALLIUS. Accordingly, Appellants submit that VALLIUS further fails to anticipate, *inter alia*, said elastic transfer belt is arranged in at least one of a region of a press section for dewatering and a drying section for drying the fibrous material web, as recited in claim 2; said fibrous material web comprises one of a paper, cardboard, and tissue web, as recited in claim 3; said elastic transfer belt is arranged to travels between a press section and a drying section, as recited in claim 9; the fibrous material web is continuously guided by at least one roll or belt in said press section, as recited in claim 10; said elastic transfer belt is arranged to at least one of accept the fibrous material web without any open draw from said delivery element and deliver the fibrous material web

without any open draw to said accepting element, as recited in claim 11; said delivery element comprises one of a roll and a belt, as recited in claim 12; said delivery element comprises a press felt, as recited in claim 13; said accepting element comprises one of a roll and a belt, as recited in claim 14; said accepting element comprises one of a drying cylinder and a suctioned roll, as recited in claim 15; said elastic transfer belt is permeable, as recited in claim 16; suction devices arranged on sides of said elastic transfer belt opposite to the fibrous material web, as recited in claim 17; said elastic transfer belt has a smooth surface, as recited in claim 18; a guide roll is arranged to guide said elastic transfer belt, and said guide roll is positioned between said delivery of the fibrous material web to said acceptance element and said acceptance of the fibrous material web from said delivery element, as recited in claim 19; said guide roll comprises a suctioned roll, as recited in claim 20; and said transfer belt is structured and arranged to be stretched more in said zone of said accepting element than in said zone of said delivery element, as recited in claim 33.

Accordingly, Appellants request that the Board reverse the Examiner's decision to finally reject claims 1 - 20, 32, and 33 under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) and remand the application to the examining group for early allowance.

(D) Conclusion

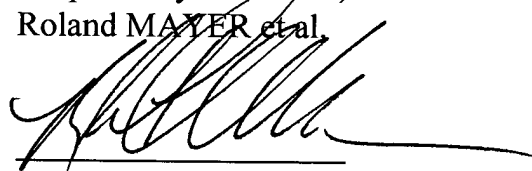
Claims 1 - 20, 32, and 33 are patentable under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) over VALLIUS. Specifically, the applied art of record fails to disclose each and every recited feature of

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Appellants' claims 1 - 20, 32, and 33. Accordingly, Appellants respectfully request that the Board reverse the Examiner's decision to finally reject claims 1 - 20, 32, and 33 under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) and remand the application to the Examiner for withdrawal of the rejection.

Thus, Appellant respectfully submits that each and every pending claim of the present application meets the requirements for patentability under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a), and that the present application and each pending claim are allowable over the prior art of record.

Respectfully submitted,
Roland MAYER et al.


Neil F. Greenblum
Reg. No. 28,394 *LA 35, 2/3*

May 19, 2003
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Attachments: Appendix: Claims on Appeal

APPENDIX

CLAIMS ON APPEAL

1. An apparatus for guiding a fibrous material web in machines for at least one of producing and processing the fibrous material web, comprising:

an elastic transfer belt arranged to transfer the fibrous material web between an acceptance region and a delivery region;

a delivery element arranged to deliver the fibrous material web to said elastic transfer belt, wherein, during acceptance of the fibrous material web from said delivery element, said elastic transfer belt is arranged to travel at a same speed as or at only a slightly higher speed than said delivery element;

an accepting element arranged to accept the fibrous material web from said elastic transfer belt, wherein, during delivery of the fibrous material web to said accepting element, said transfer belt is arranged to travel with a same speed as or with only a slightly higher speed than said accepting element,

wherein said transfer belt is driven or slowed to be stretched more during delivery of the fibrous material web to said accepting element belt than during acceptance of the fibrous material web from said delivery element.

2. The apparatus in accordance with claim 1, wherein said elastic transfer belt is arranged in at least one of a region of a press section for dewatering and a drying section for drying the fibrous material web.

3. The apparatus in accordance with claim 1, wherein said fibrous material web comprises one of a paper, cardboard, and tissue web.

4. The apparatus in accordance with claim 1, further comprising guide rolls arranged to control speeds of said elastic transfer belt;

at least one of said guide rolls being positioned in, or subsequently to, a region of delivery of the fibrous material web by said elastic transfer belt,

at least one other guide roll positioned in, or subsequent to, a region of acceptance of the fibrous material web by said elastic transfer belt,

wherein said at least one guide roll is arranged to rotate faster than said at least one other guide roll.

5. The apparatus in accordance with claim 4, wherein at least one additional roll is positioned in said region of acceptance of the fibrous material web by said elastic transfer belt has about a same speed as said at least one other guide roll.

6. The apparatus in accordance with claim 4, wherein said at least one guide roll is positioned behind, relative to a web travel direction, said region of delivery of the fibrous material web to said elastic transfer belt.

7. The apparatus in accordance with claim 1, wherein a speed of said elastic transfer belt during said acceptance of the fibrous material web by said elastic transfer belt is about 0.2% to 5.0% lower than during said delivery of the fibrous material web to said

acceptance element.

8. The apparatus in accordance with claim 7, wherein said speed of said elastic transfer belt during said acceptance of the fibrous material web by said elastic transfer belt is about 0.5% to 4.0% lower than during said delivery of the fibrous material web to said acceptance element.

9. The apparatus in accordance with claim 1, wherein said elastic transfer belt is arranged to travel between a press section and a drying section.

10. The apparatus in accordance with claim 9, wherein the fibrous material web is continuously guided by at least one roll or belt in said press section.

11. The apparatus in accordance with claim 1, wherein said elastic transfer belt is arranged to at least one of accept the fibrous material web without any open draw from said delivery element and deliver the fibrous material web without any open draw to said accepting element.

12. The apparatus in accordance with claim 1, wherein said delivery element comprises one of a roll and a belt.

13. The apparatus in accordance with claim 12, wherein said delivery element comprises a press felt.

14. The apparatus in accordance with claim 1, wherein said accepting element comprises one of a roll and a belt.

15. The apparatus in accordance with claim 14, wherein said accepting element comprises one of a drying cylinder and a suctioned roll.

16. The apparatus in accordance with claim 1, wherein said elastic transfer belt is permeable.

17. The apparatus in accordance with claim 16, further comprising suction devices arranged on sides of said elastic transfer belt opposite to the fibrous material web.

18. The apparatus in accordance with claim 1, wherein said elastic transfer belt has a smooth surface.

19. The apparatus in accordance with claim 18, wherein a guide roll is arranged to guide said elastic transfer belt, and said guide roll is positioned between said delivery of the fibrous material web to said acceptance element and said acceptance of the fibrous material web from said delivery element.

20. The apparatus in accordance with claim 19, wherein said guide roll comprises a suctioned roll.

21. A process for guiding a fibrous material web in an apparatus for at least one of producing and processing the fibrous material web, the apparatus including an elastic transfer belt, a delivery element and an accepting element, the process comprising:

transferring, on the elastic transfer belt, the fibrous material web between an acceptance region and a delivery region;

accepting, on the elastic transfer belt, the fibrous material web from the delivery element, and driving the elastic transfer belt, during the accepting of the fibrous material web from the delivery element, to travel at a same speed as or at only a slightly higher speed than the delivery element;

delivering, by the elastic transfer belt, the fibrous material web to the accepting element, and driving the elastic transfer belt, during the delivering of the fibrous material web to the accepting element, to travel with a same speed as or with only a slightly higher speed than said accepting element; and

stretching the transfer belt more during the delivering of the fibrous material web to the accepting element belt than during the accepting of the fibrous material web from the delivery element.

22. The process in accordance with claim 21, further comprising driving the elastic transfer belt in at least one of a region of a press section for dewatering and a drying section for drying the fibrous material web.

23. The process in accordance with claim 21, wherein said fibrous material web comprises one of a paper, cardboard, and tissue web.

24. The process in accordance with claim 21, wherein the apparatus further includes guide rolls, such that at least one of the guide rolls is positioned in, or subsequently to, a region of delivery of the fibrous material web by the elastic transfer belt, and at least one

other guide roll positioned in, or subsequent to, a region of acceptance of the fibrous material web by the elastic transfer belt, and wherein the stretching comprises rotating the at least one guide roll faster than the at least one other guide roll.

25. The process in accordance with claim 24, wherein at least one additional roll is positioned in the region of acceptance of the fibrous material web by the elastic transfer belt, and the process further comprises driving the at least one additional roll at about a same speed as the at least one other guide roll.

26. The process in accordance with claim 24, wherein said at least one guide roll is positioned behind, relative to a web travel direction, the region of delivery of the fibrous material web to said elastic transfer belt.

27. The process in accordance with claim 21, wherein a speed of the elastic transfer belt during the acceptance of the fibrous material web by the elastic transfer belt is about 0.2% to 5.0% lower than during the delivery of the fibrous material web to said acceptance element.

28. The process in accordance with claim 27, wherein the speed of the elastic transfer belt during the acceptance of the fibrous material web by the elastic transfer belt is about 0.5% to 4.0% lower than during the delivery of the fibrous material web to the acceptance element.

29. The process in accordance with claim 21, further comprising accepting the

fibrous material web on the elastic transfer belt without any open draw from said delivery element and delivering the fibrous material web from the elastic transfer belt without any open draw to the accepting element.

30. The process in accordance with claim 21, wherein the elastic transfer belt is permeable.

31. The process in accordance with claim 30, further comprising suctioning sides of the elastic transfer belt opposite to the fibrous material web.

32. An apparatus for guiding a fibrous material web in machines for at least one of producing and processing the fibrous material web, comprising:

an elastic transfer belt arranged to transfer the fibrous material web between an acceptance region and a delivery region;

a delivery element arranged to deliver the fibrous material web to said elastic transfer belt, wherein, during acceptance of the fibrous material web from said delivery element, said elastic transfer belt is arranged to travel at a same speed as or at only a slightly higher speed than said delivery element;

an accepting element arranged to accept the fibrous material web from said elastic transfer belt, wherein, during delivery of the fibrous material web to said accepting element, said transfer belt is arranged to travel with a same speed as or with only a slightly higher speed than said accepting element;

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a first guide roll arranged to drive said transfer belt in a zone of said accepting element;

a second guide roll arranged to drive said transfer belt in a zone of said delivery element;

wherein said first guide roll is structured and arranged to drive said transfer belt, in said zone of said accepting element, at a speed faster than a speed at which said second guide roll is structured and arranged to drive said transfer belt in said zone of said delivery element.

33. The apparatus in accordance with claim 32, wherein said transfer belt is structured and arranged to be stretched more in said zone of said accepting element than in said zone of said delivery element.